The Reward of Good

Adopting Positive Characteristics Leads to Peace of Mind

The Reward of Good

ShaykhPod Books

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All praise to Allah, the Exalted, Lord of the worlds and endless blessings and peace by upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, on his blessed Household and Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all.

Compiler's Notes

We have tried diligently to do justice in this volume however if there are any short falls found then the compiler is personally and solely responsible for them.

We accept the possibility of faults and shortcomings in an effort to complete such a difficult task. We might have unconsciously stumbled and committed errors for which we ask for indulgence and forgiveness of our readers and the drawing of our attention thereto will be appreciated. We earnestly invite constructive suggestions which can be made to ShaykhPod.Books@gmail.com.

Introduction

The following short book discusses some good characteristics and actions and their reward in both worlds. This discussion is based on Chapter 3 Alee Imran, Verses 130-136 of the Holy Quran:

"O you who have believed, do not consume usury, doubled and multiplied, but fear Allah that you may be successful. And fear the Fire, which has been prepared for the disbelievers. And obey Allah and the Messenger that you may obtain mercy. And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden [Paradise] as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous. Who spend [in the cause of Allah] during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people - and Allah loves the doers of good. And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves [by transgression], remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allah? - and [who] do not persist in what they have done while they know. Those - their reward is forgiveness from their Lord and gardens beneath which rivers flow [in Paradise], wherein they will abide eternally; and excellent is the reward of the [righteous] workers."

Implementing the lessons discussed will aid one to Adopt Positive Characteristics. Adopting Positive Characteristics Leads to Peace of Mind and Body.

The Reward of Good

Chapter 3 – Alee Imran, Verses 130-136

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تَأۡكُلُواْ ٱلرِّبَوٰٓاْ أَضۡعَٰفٗا مُّضَٰعَفَةٗۖ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تُفۡلِحُونَ ١٣٠

وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱلنَّارَ ٱلَّتِيٓ أُعِدَّتۡ لِلۡكَٰفِرِينَ ١٣١

وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱلرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تُرۡحَمُونَ ١٣٢

۞ وَسَارِعُوٓاْ إِلَىٰ مَغۡفِرَةٖ مِّن رَّبِّكُمۡ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرۡضُهَا ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتُ وَٱلۡأَرۡضُ أُعِدَّتۡ لِلۡمُتَّقِينَ ١٣٣

ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ فِي ٱلسَّرَّآءِ وَٱلضَّرَّآءِ وَٱلۡكَٰظِمِينَ ٱلۡغَيۡظَ وَٱلۡعَافِينَ عَنِ ٱلنَّاسِۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُحِبُّ ٱلۡمُحۡسِنِينَ ١٣٤

وَٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُواْ فَٰحِشَةً أَوۡ ظَلَمُوٓاْ أَنفُسَهُمۡ ذَكَرُواْ ٱللَّهَ فَٱسۡتَغۡفَرُواْ لِذُنُوبِهِمۡ وَمَن يَغۡفِرُ ٱلذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهُ وَلَمۡ يُصِرُّواْ عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُواْ وَهُمۡ يَعۡلَمُونَ ١٣٥

أُولَٰئِكَ جَزَآؤُهُم مَّغۡفِرَةٞ مِّن رَّبِّهِمۡ وَجَنَّٰتٞ تَجۡرِي مِن تَحۡتِهَا ٱلۡأَنۡهَٰرُ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا وَنِعۡمَ أَجۡرُ ٱلۡعَٰمِلِينَ ١٣٦

“O you who have believed, do not consume usury, doubled and multiplied, but fear Allah that you may be successful.

And fear the Fire, which has been prepared for the disbelievers.

And obey Allah and the Messenger that you may obtain mercy.

And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden [Paradise] as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous.

Who spend [in the cause of Allah] during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people - and Allah loves the doers of good.

And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves [by transgression], remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allah? - and [who] do not persist in what they have done while they know.

Those - their reward is forgiveness from their Lord and gardens beneath which rivers flow [in Paradise], wherein they will abide eternally; and excellent is the reward of the [righteous] workers.”

After commenting on the events of the Battle of Uhud, which resulted in a loss in manpower and a financial loss for the muslims, Allah, the Exalted, warns the muslim community to avoid dealing with usury. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 130:

“O you who have believed, do not consume usury, doubled and multiplied, but fear Allāh that you may be successful.”

When Allah, the Exalted, calls upon the believers within the Holy Quran, His call is often connected to actualizing their verbal claim of faith. This is because a verbal claim of faith without actions has very little value in Islam. Actions are the proof and evidence one is required to obtain so that they obtain reward and mercy in both worlds. Just like a fruit bearing tree is only useful when it produces fruit, similarly, faith is only useful when it produces good actions. In this case, Allah, the Exalted, warns muslims from dealing with usury as it only causes financial instability for a society.

Financial interest denotes the amount that a lender receives from a borrower at a fixed rate of interest. At the time of the revelation of the Holy Quran many forms of interest transactions were practiced. Of these one was that the vendor sold an article and fixed a time limit for the payment of the price, stipulating that if the buyer failed to pay within the specified period of time they would extend the time limit but increase the price of the article. Another was that a person loaned a sum of money to another person and stipulated that the borrower should return a specified amount in excess of the amount loaned within a given time limit. A third form of interest transaction was that the borrower and vendor agreed that the

former would repay the loan within a certain limit at a fixed rate of interest, and that if they failed to do so within the limit the lender would extend the time limit but at the same time would increase the rate of interest. It is transactions such as these that the injunctions mentioned here apply.

Those who believe this fail to differentiate between the profit gained from lawful investment and financial interest. As a result of this confusion some argue that if profit on money invested in a business is lawful why should the profit made from a loan be deemed unlawful? They argue that instead of a person investing their wealth they loan it to somebody who in turn makes a profit out of it. In such circumstances why should the borrower not pay the lender a part of the profit? They fail to recognize that no business venture is immune from risk. No venture carries an absolute guarantee of profit. Therefore, it is not fair that the financier alone should be considered entitled to a profit at a fixed rate in all circumstances and should be protected against any chance of loss. It is not a part of justice that those who dedicate their resources are not guaranteed profit at any fixed rate whereas those who lend their wealth are fully secured against all risks of loss and are guaranteed profit at a fixed rate.

In a normal lawful transaction a buyer derives benefit from an item which they purchase from a seller. The seller receives compensation for the effort and time spent on making the item. In interest-related transactions on the other hand, exchange of benefits does not take place equitably. The interest receiving party receives a fixed amount as a payment for the loan they gave and thus their gain is secured. The other party can make use of the funds loaned but it may not always yield a profit. If such a person spends the borrowed funds on a need there will be no profit. Even if the funds are invested then one stands the chance of both making a profit or

incurring a loss. Hence an interest-related transaction causes either a loss on one side and a profit on the other or an assured and fixed profit on one side and an uncertain profit on the other. Therefore, lawful trade is not equal to financial interest.

In addition, the burden of interest makes it extremely difficult for borrowers to repay the loan. They may even have to borrow from another source in order to pay off the original loan and interest. Because of the way interest works the sum outstanding against them often remains even after they have repaid the loan. This financial pressure can prevent people obtaining the necessities of life for themselves and their families. This stress can lead to many physical and mental problems.

Ultimately, in this type of system only the rich get richer while the poor get poorer.

Even though dealing with financial interest may outwardly seem that a person gains wealth but in reality it only causes an overall loss to them. This loss can take many forms. For example, it may lead them to losing good and lawful business dealings they could have obtained if they refrained from dealing with financial interest. Allah, the Exalted, may cause them to use their wealth in ways which do not please them. For example, they may encounter physical ailments which causes them to spend their precious unlawful wealth thereby failing to use it in ways pleasing to them. The overall loss has a spiritual aspect also. The more they deal with financial interest the greater their greed becomes meaning, their greed for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even

if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they lost the grace which accompanies lawful business and wealth. This may even push them towards gaining more unlawful wealth through financial interest and other means. The loss in the hereafter is more obvious. They will be left empty handed on the Day of Judgement as no good deed which is rooted in the unlawful, such as giving charity with unlawful wealth, is accepted by Allah, the Exalted. It does not take a scholar to determine where this person is likely to end up on Judgement Day.

There is a huge difference between lawful business transactions and interest-related transactions. The former plays a beneficial role in society whereas the latter leads to its decline. By its very nature interest breeds greed, selfishness, apathy and cruelty towards others. It leads to the worship of wealth and destroys compassion and unity with others. Thus it can ruin society from both an economic and a moral viewpoint.

Charity, on the other hand, is the outcome of generosity and compassion. Due to mutual co-operation and goodwill the society will develop positively which in turn benefits everyone. It is obvious that if there is a society whose individuals are selfish in their dealings with one another, in which the interests of the rich are directly opposed to the interests of the common people, that society does not rest on stable foundations. In such a society, instead of love and compassion there is bound to grow mutual spite and bitterness.

To conclude, when people fulfil their own needs and the needs of their dependents and then spend in charitable ways with their surplus wealth or take part in mutually lawful business ventures then the trade, industry, and agriculture in such a society will improve. The standard of living within the society will rise and production in it will be much higher than in societies where economic activity is constricted by financial interest.

Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 130:

“O you who have believed, do not consume usury, doubled and multiplied…”

The Arabic word used for consume literally means to eat. This warns that dealing with unlawful means of obtaining wealth, such as financial interest, only encourages one to adopt a greedy and selfish mentality whereby they only care about earning more wealth irrespective of the negative effects it has on them and others. These people consume financial interest, just like a greedy person consumes food when they are extremely hungry. They become so obsessed with earning more wealth by whatever means that they appear insane by normal standards. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 275:

“*Those who consume interest cannot stand except as one stands who is being beaten by Satan into insanity…”*

The muslims who adopts this mentality will undoubtedly destroy their faith as they will do things which contradict it. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, that the excessive love and desire for wealth and leadership is more destructive to a muslim's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep. It is important to understand that this insane attitude will prevent one from achieving peace of mind, even if they obtain much wealth. This is because their attitude will cause them to misuse the blessings they have been granted, as a result they will not obtain a balanced mental and physical state and they will undoubtedly misplace everything and everyone within their life. The constant thought of gaining more wealth and the constant fear of losing whatever wealth they have obtained will only increase their stress, anxiety and trouble in both worlds. Extreme long hours of work and a lack of sleep and rest will only make things worse. Irrespective of how much wealth and other worldly things they obtain, they therefore will never find peace of mind. This is quite obvious when one observes the people who adopted the intense greed for obtaining wealth. Therefore, a muslim must avoid all forms of unlawful wealth, such as financial interest, for the sake of their mental and physical health.

In addition, it is important to note that just like a person's intention is the inward foundation of Islam, earning and utilizing lawful things is the outward foundation of Islam. If one's foundation is corrupt, then anything they do will be corrupt and rejected by Allah, the Exalted, such as donating charity. Corrupting the foundation of one's faith is far worse than committing sins which affect other parts of their faith and must therefore be avoided at all costs.

Allah, the Exalted, then makes a connection between a muslim persisting on sins and their punishment in the hereafter. In addition, He also connects persisting on major sins, such as dealing with usury, and dying as a disbeliever. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verses 130-131:

“O you who have believed, do not consume usury, doubled and multiplied, but fear Allāh that you may be successful. And fear the Fire, which has been prepared for the disbelievers.”

This verse eliminates wishful thinking which involves persisting on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, while expecting His mercy and forgiveness in both worlds. Whereas, real hope involves striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted correctly according to Islamic teachings and reforming one’s behaviour and then hoping for the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This difference has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459. Therefore, one must appreciate the difference and ensure they adopt real hope in the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and avoid wishful thinking, as it has no value in Islam.

In addition, this verse warns muslims that if they persist on disobeying Allah, the Exalted, then there is a chance they will leave this world without their faith. This is because a verbal declaration of faith only has value when one actualizes it by practically obeying Allah, the Exalted. It is vital to

understand that faith is like a plant which must be nourished with acts of obedience to flourish and survive. The same way a plant which fails to obtain nourishment, such as sunlight, will die, so may well the faith of a person die who fails to nourish it with acts of obedience. This is the greatest loss. One must therefore avoid this outcome by fearing the consequences of their sins. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 131:

“And fear the Fire, which has been prepared for the disbelievers.”

Generally speaking, as the entire creation belongs to and is under the complete control and jurisdiction of Allah, the Exalted, a person has no choice but to comply with His rules. Just like a person will face trouble if they fail to comply with the rules set by the government in charge of a particular country, so will they face trouble in both worlds if they fail to comply with the rules of the Owner of the universe. A person may be able to leave a country if they are not pleased with its rules but they will not be able to escape to a place where the rules and jurisdiction of Allah, the Exalted, do not apply. A person may be able to change the rules of their society but they will never be able to change the rules of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, just like a person who owns a house decides the rules of the house, even if other people object to these rules, similarly, the universe belongs to Allah, the Exalted, and therefore, He alone decides the rules of this universe, whether people like these rules or not. Therefore, one must comply with these rules, for their own sake. The one who understands this fact will comply with the rules of Allah, the Exalted, and strive to obey Him by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A person can either strive to learn the wisdoms behind the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the

Exalted, so that they understand how they benefit them and the wider society and how they lead to peace of mind and body in both worlds or they can worship their desires and reject the teachings of Islam. But the one who fails to comply with Islamic rules should prepare themselves to face the consequences of their choice in both worlds and no objections, protests or complaints will save them. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verse 29:

“And say, "The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills - let him believe; and whoever wills - let him disbelieve." Indeed, We have prepared for the wrongdoers a fire whose walls will surround them. And if they call for relief, they will be relieved with water like murky oil, which scalds [their] faces. Wretched is the drink, and evil is the resting place.”

One must therefore avoid misusing the blessings they have been granted as it leads to punishment in both worlds. In this world, the worldly things one obtains through disobeying Allah, the Exalted, will become a source of stress, trouble and difficulties for them, even if they possess worldly luxuries, as they cannot escape the power and control of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

In addition, the one who misuses the blessings they have been granted will obtain an unbalanced mental and physical state and they will misplace

everything and everyone within their life. This will add to their stress and trouble in both worlds. In addition, as this behaviour prevents them from adequately preparing for their accountability on the Day of Judgement, the punishment they face in the hereafter will be more obvious and far worse than the punishment of this world. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 131:

“And fear the Fire, which has been prepared for the disbelievers.”

One must therefore avoid this attitude by striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings they have been granted correctly as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This behaviour leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Therefore, a person must accept and act on Islamic teachings for their own sake, even if it contradicts their desires. They must behave as a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. The same way this wise patient will achieve good mental and physical health, so will the person who accepts and acts on Islamic teachings. This is because the only One who has the knowledge required to ensure a person achieves a balanced mental and physical state and correctly places everything and everyone within their life is Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the mental and physical states of humans possessed by society will never be enough to achieve this outcome, despite all the research that has been undertaken, as they cannot solve every issue a person can face within their life, their advice cannot cause one to avoid all types of mental and physical stress nor can their advice cause one to correctly place everything and everyone with in their life, due to limited knowledge, experience, foresight and due to biases. Allah, the Exalted, alone has this knowledge and He has granted it

to mankind in the form of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This truth is obvious when one observes those who use the blessings they have been granted according to Islamic teachings and those who do not. Even though, in most cases, patients do not understand the science behind the medicines they are prescribed and therefore blindly trust their doctor, Allah, the Exalted, invites people to reflect on the teachings of Islam so that they can appreciate its positive effects on their lives. He does not expect people to blindly trust the teachings of Islam and instead He wants them to recognize its truthfulness from its clear proofs. But this requires a person to adopt an unbiased and open mind when approaching the teachings of Islam. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

“Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me….””

In addition, as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind, He alone decides who obtains it and who does not. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

And it is clear that Allah, the Exalted, will only give peace of mind to those who use the blessings He has granted them correctly. This is achieved

through the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 132:

“And obey Allāh and the Messenger that you may obtain mercy.”

Obedience to Allah, the Exalted, involves performing good deeds for His pleasure. The one who acts for other reasons will not gain reward from Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. Obedience to Allah, the Exalted, also involves fulfilling the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is understanding it and the final aspect is sincerely acting on it.

Obedience to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, involves learning and acting on his life and teachings. One must therefore support their verbal declaration of believing, loving and respecting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by learning and acting on his life and teachings. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.""

And chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

"...And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from..."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 80:

“And they say, "Never will the Fire touch us, except for [a few] numbered days." Say, "Have you taken a covenant with Allāh? For Allāh will never break His covenant. Or do you say about Allāh that which you do not know?"”

And chapter 4 An Nisa, verses 150-151:

“Indeed, those who disbelieve in Allāh and His messengers and wish to discriminate between Allāh and His messengers and say, "We believe in some and disbelieve in others," and wish to adopt a way in between. Those are the disbelievers, truly. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment.”

And chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah…”

And chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 21:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.”

One must model their character upon his blessed character so that they adopt good qualities, such as patience, gratitude and generosity, and abandon negative characteristics, such as envy, pride and greed. This will ensure they achieve peace of mind, as adopting positive characteristics leads to a positive mindset. Learning and acting on the life and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will also ensure one represents him correctly to the outside world. The one who fails to do this will inevitably misrepresent him and therefore put off non-muslims and other muslims from learning and acting on Islamic teachings. Misrepresenting him will also cause the outside world to criticize the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when they observe the bad behaviour of muslims. This is something every muslim will answer for as it is a duty on them to correctly represent Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to the outside world.

In addition, just like the previous nations who claim to love their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, will not join them in the hereafter as they failed to practically follow them, neither will the muslims who fail to practically follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, join him in the hereafter. Instead, a person will join those who they practically imitated in this world. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031.

The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted correctly. This leads to a balanced mental and physical state and ensures one correctly places everything and everyone within their life while adequately preparing for their accountability on the Day of Judgement. This leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 132:

“And obey Allāh and the Messenger that you may obtain mercy.”

This also indicates the importance of sincerely obeying the two sources of guidance: the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and avoiding all other sources of religious knowledge. The more one acts on other sources of religious knowledge, even if they lead to good deeds, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance, which in turn leads to misguidance. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted. In addition, the more one acts on other sources of religious knowledge the more they will begin to act on things which contradict the teachings of Islam. This is how the Devil leads people astray, step by step. For example, a person facing difficulties will be advised to perform certain spiritual exercises which contradict and challenge the teachings of Islam. As this person is ignorant and has a habit of acting on other sources of religious knowledge, they will easily fall into this trap and begin to perform spiritual exercises that directly challenge the teachings of Islam. They will even begin to believe things about Allah, the Exalted, and the universe which contradict the teachings of Islam also, such as believing people or supernatural creatures can control their destiny, as their knowledge is taken from other than the two sources of guidance. Some of these misguided practices and beliefs are clear disbelief, such as practicing black magic. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 102:

“…It was not Solomon who disbelieved, but the devils disbelieved, teaching people magic and that which was revealed to the two angels at Babylon, Hārūt and Mārūt. But they [i.e., the two angels] do not teach anyone unless they say, "We are a trial, so do not disbelieve [by practicing magic]."…”

So a muslim can lose their faith without even realizing it, as they have the habit of acting on other sources of religious knowledge. This is why acting on religious innovations which are not rooted in the two sources of guidance is following in the footsteps of the Devil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 208:

“O you who have believed, enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”

In the following verses, Allah, the Exalted, then explains some aspects of His obedience and the obedience of His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 133:

“And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord…”

As Allah, the Exalted, does not demand perfection from people, He ensures the doors of repentance and reformation are always open to them. But a person must take advantage of the time they have been granted and not delay correcting their intentions, speech and actions, as the end of one’s life is unknown and often occurs unexpectedly. In addition, repenting from sins is not accepted at the time of one’s death. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verses 17-18:

“The repentance accepted by Allāh is only for those who do wrong in ignorance [i.e. when losing control over emotions] and then repent soon [after]. It is those to whom Allāh will turn in forgiveness, and Allāh is ever Knowing and Wise. But repentance is not [accepted] of those who [continue to] do evil deeds up until, when death comes to one of them, he says, "Indeed, I have repented now," or of those who die while they are disbelievers. For them We have prepared a painful punishment.”

Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble. One must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Sincere repentance prevents one from persisting on the same or similar sin and it encourages one to correctly use the blessings they have been granted as outlined in Islamic teachings. Therefore, it will ensure they obtain peace of mind in both worlds through obtaining a balanced mental and physical state and by correctly placing everything and everyone within their life while adequately preparing for their accountability on Judgement Day. This attitude is the foundation of the righteousness mentioned in the main verses under discussion. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 133:

“And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden [i.e., Paradise] as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous.”

Allah, the Exalted, then further highlights some of the characteristics of righteousness. It is important to note that this further indicates that one's verbal declaration of faith in Islam is not good enough until they support it with practical actions of obedience and righteousness. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 134:

"Who spend [in the cause of Allāh] during ease and hardship…"

This involves using the blessings one has been granted, such as one's energy, time and wealth, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In order to adopt the correct attitude whereby one persists on this behaviour in both times of ease and hardship, they must adopt gratitude and patience. Gratitude will encourage one to obey Allah, the Exalted, in times of ease and patience will encourage them to obey Allah, the Exalted, in times of difficulty. Gratitude in one's intention involves only acting in order to please Allah, the Exalted. Gratitude in one's speech involves speaking what is good or remaining silent. And gratitude in one's actions involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In addition, patience involves avoiding complaining with one's speech or actions and remaining firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, believing He only chooses what is best for them, even if this is not obvious to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

Therefore, the one who acts in the correct way in every situation will have the constant support and mercy of Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500.

Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 134:

“Who spend [in the cause of Allāh] during ease and hardship…”

When a Muslim truly believes that everything they possess belongs to Allah, the Exalted, then using the blessings they possess correctly, such as giving charity, through the grace of Allah, the Exalted, becomes easy. One who adopts this attitude realizes they are simply returning a loan that was given to them by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 254:

“O you who have believed, spend from that which We have provided for you…”

This behaviour also protects one from destroying their good deed of charity through pride. Pride makes a person believe they are doing Allah, the Exalted, and the needy a favor by donating charity. But the same way one returns a bank loan without pride Muslims need to realize their charity is a way of repaying the loan given by Allah, the Exalted. In addition, the needy are doing the donor a favor by taking their charity. The needy are a means for them to obtain reward from Allah, the Exalted, and without them this would be impossible. If one believes that their wealth was accumulated through their intelligence and strength they must understand that these things were also given by Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, this loan in the form of blessings such as wealth must be returned to Allah, the Exalted, otherwise they may face a penalty that will begin in this world and continue into the hereafter.

When one donates charity their transaction is not with a needy person in fact it is with Allah, the Exalted. When a person sincerely does business with Allah, the Exalted, they can be confident of an unimaginable profit which will benefit them in this world and in the next. This has been indicated in the main verses under discussion. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over?...”

Patience is also required for the next aspect of righteousness discussed in the main verses under discussion. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 134:

“…and who restrain anger…”

This verse does not mean a righteous person does not feel anger, as feeling anger is an innate characteristics that even the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, felt. In fact, anger is a useful characteristic when controlled and utilized in the right way, such as in times of self-defense. Islam teaches people to control their anger so that they do not commit sins by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, with their speech or actions. For example, an angry person should remain silent and only talk after their anger has left them. A person should leave the situation they are involved in when they are angry and return only when they have calmed down. Words can often be more damaging than actions therefore, it is vital to control one’s speech, especially when they are angry. In order to control their actions, an angry person must take an inactive body position. Meaning, if they are standing they should sit down and if they are sitting down, then they should lie down until they calm down. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4782. A person should counter the negative effects of anger by adopting praiseworthy characteristics, such as patience, forbearance and forgiveness, which are discussed within Islamic teachings and abandon the negative characteristics discussed within Islamic teachings, such as obscene speech.

Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 134:

“…and who restrain anger and who pardon the people…”

When one learns to control their anger so that they speak and act according to the teachings of Islam, forgiving others will become easier for them. Forgiving others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is a great deed as it leads to their own forgiveness. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“…and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

One must always remember that as people are not Angels, they are bound to make mistakes, just like they themself make mistakes. And just like they desire for Allah, the Exalted, and people to pardon their mistakes, they should learn to forgive the mistakes of other people also. It is understandable that a person may struggle to forgive another over an issue which is ongoing, such as becoming disabled after a traffic accident. If they can strive to forgive even in this case then the reward will be greater for them. But in cases where the wrong done to someone is not ongoing, a person should pardon others and not hold onto grudges. The one who holds onto these types of grudges should fear that Allah, the Exalted, will scrutinise their deeds on the Day of Judgement, just like they scrutinised and held onto the mistakes of people in this world. The one whose deeds are scrutinised on Judgement Day will be punished. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 103. Finally, it is

important to note that forgiving others includes taking steps to protect oneself from the harm of others so that history does not repeat itself. Patience and forgiving others do not involve adopting a passive attitude whereby one allows others to wrong them and they fail to take steps to protect themself from being harmed again. This passive attitude has nothing to do with the teachings of Islam. For example, a woman who is being physical abused by her husband, must take steps to protect herself and her children, even if this involves calling the police and leaving him. After she has protected herself and her children from his harm and moved on with her life, she can seek justice in this world, through the government, and seek justice on the Day of Judgement from Allah, the Exalted. But if she can forgive him for his past mistakes against her for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, that would lead to her forgiveness. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 134:

“…and Allāh loves the doers of good.”

This makes it clear that divine love is obtained through acts of obedience, not just through a verbal declaration of faith. The more one persists on doing good, which involves using the blessings one has been granted correctly as outlined in Islamic teachings, the more divine care, love and protection they will obtain in both worlds. This will ensure they obtain peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely

give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But it is important to note that divine love and care does not mean one will get all their supplications and desires fulfilled in this world or that they will avoid facing difficulties. It means Allah, the Exalted, will grant them peace of mind through every situation they face, whether times of ease or difficulty as long as they remain firm on His obedience. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 134:

“…and Allāh loves the doers of good.”

In addition, as no limit has been set on doing good, it leaves people with no excuses. Doing good involves using the blessings one has been granted correctly as outlined in Islamic teachings and can therefore be achieved by everyone irrespective of how much or little worldly things they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 135:

“And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves…”

This could be referring to major and minor sins. Sins have been classified as minor and major. Many different things have been discussed in order to classify major and minor sins. For example, any sin which the Islamic government will punish is defined as a major sin. And any sin which has been connected to Hell, the anger or curse of Allah, the Exalted, is considered a major sin. In addition, persisting on minor sins can also cause them to become major sins. Major sins are only forgiven with sincere repentance whereas minor sins can be erased by avoiding the major sins and performing righteous deeds. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 31:

"If you avoid the major sins which you are forbidden, We will remove from you your lesser sins…"

Islamic teachings has intentionally avoided listing major and minor sins so that muslims remain vigilant by assuming any sin they commit can be considered a major one. If a list was granted to people, then many of them would undoubtedly persist on minor sins believing they are insignificant.

Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 135:

"And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves…"

This also indicates that when one commits a sin, in reality they are only wronging themself, even if this is not obvious to them. The infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, does not change whether one obeys Him or not. In addition, the more one misuses the blessings they have been granted, the more imbalanced their mental and physical state will become and the more they will misplace everything and everyone within their life and the less they will practically prepare for their accountability on Judgement Day. This will only cause them stress, trouble and difficulties in both worlds, even if they enjoy worldly luxuries. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

In addition, when one wrongs another person, they will face justice if they are not forgiven by their victim. In the hereafter, they will be forced to give their good deeds to their victims and if necessary, they will take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This may well cause the wrongdoer to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Therefore, one must avoid committing sins for their own sake, whether this involves violating the rights of Allah, the Exalted, or people.

Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 135:

“And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves [by transgression], remember Allāh and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allāh? - and [who] do not persist in what they have done while they know.”

As mentioned earlier, Allah, the Exalted, does not demand perfection from people. He instead expects people to strive in His obedience and whenever they happen to commit a sin, to sincerely repent and reform their behaviour. Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble. One must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

In addition, this verse eliminates the false concept of wishful thinking whereby one persists on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, while assuming they will obtain His mercy and forgiveness. Whereas, real hope involves striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted correctly according to Islamic teachings and reforming one's behaviour and then hoping for the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This difference has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459. Therefore, one must appreciate the difference and ensure they adopt real hope in the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and avoid wishful thinking, as it has no value in Islam.

Allah, the Exalted, then guarantees forgiveness and success in both worlds to those who adopt the characteristics of righteousness discussed within Islamic teachings. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 136:

"Those - their reward is forgiveness from their Lord and gardens beneath which rivers flow [in Paradise], wherein they will abide eternally; and excellent is the reward of the [righteous] workers."

But as mentioned earlier, Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear in this verse that this reward is for those who actualize their verbal declaration of faith with good actions. As discussed earlier, it is vital to understand that faith is like a plant which must be nourished with acts of obedience to flourish and survive. The same way a plant which fails to obtain nourishment, such as sunlight, will die, so may well the faith of a person die who fails to nourish it with acts of obedience. This is the greatest loss.

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